

Hitting Part 1: From the Hips Down

Skills: The Hitting Stance

To be a consistent hitter, you must begin with a firm foundation – a strong, base from which to swing the bat.



- Start with your best athletic stance;
- Legs slightly wider than shoulders for a stronger, more balanced stance;
- Toes pointing straight in front of body;
- Feet evenly lined up with each other;
- Knees comfortably bent with slight bend at the waist;
- Weight balanced on front half of feet with heels on ground;
- Chest over knees with head in center of body;
- Weight evenly distributed between front & back legs or 60% on back leg (*Not too far back in initial stance, or won't have room to go back with proper load*);
- Stance should be comfortable, strong, flexible, & natural, allowing control of body from beginning of swing to end (*stance, load, stride swing & follow-through*);
- Your stance should allow a slow, smooth load, putting you in your strongest, quickest launch position to hit the ball.

Drills: The Hitting Stance

Drill #1 – Playing Basketball With A Bat: Picture yourself as a defensive player in basketball. You need to be ready to defend both the pass and the dribble. This means you need to have a strong, balanced stance. You need to be able to react quickly when it's time to make the defensive play. Practice putting yourself in a defensive basketball stance, placing a bat in your hands, and then taking swings off a batting tee.

Drill #2 – Knee Flex Check: One of the most common faults in a hitter's stance is not having enough flex in the knees. Here's an easy drill to see if your knees have enough flex in your stance. Assume your normal stance with a bat in your hands and look at an imaginary pitcher. Then take a look at your feet, one foot at a time. If you can see the knotted laces of your shoes or any part of your socks, you don't have enough flex. If your knee blocks a view of your knotted laces and you can see only the forward part of your shoe (*toes and first few laces*), then you are in a good stance with the necessary flex.

Drill #3 – Knee Flex Swing Drill: Assume a relaxed upright stance (*without much knee flex, if any*) in the batter's box during hitting practice on the field or in a batting cage. As the pitcher begins to swing his throwing arm upward, bend (*flex*) your knees slightly, like you are beginning to sit down (*approximately 3 inches*), just before you load & stride. The order of movements to contact is: Relaxed upright stance; Sit down (*bend/flex knees only; your waist will naturally bend slightly with the knee bend*); Load with stride or no stride; Swing. Be sure to "*drop*" or bend/flex only at the knees. Your upper body should remain tall. This drill will help keep your feet planted and firm and provide you with good balance. Make sure you "*sit down*" in time to pick up the ball at the pitcher's release point. Your eyes need to be in a set position to help you see and track the ball clearly before the pitcher reaches his release point. This will help you to load and stride at the proper time, producing good timing, a quick bat, and an explosive swing.

Life Lessons: Your Stance In Life

A firm foundation is not only an important ingredient for consistent hitting, but it is essential for living a consistent, balanced and impactful life. Your life is like a house. Without a solid foundation, a house cannot stand against strong winds and storms. Over time, it will crash & fall. Read the Words of Jesus in **Matthew 7:24-27** about the Wise and Foolish Builders. Which builder do you want to be?

(24) "Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. (25) The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. (26) But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. (27) The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash." (NIV)

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